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ACC Launches National Public Affairs Campaign to Preserve Patient Access

Legislation Aimed at Reversing CMS Cuts to be Introduced This Week

Washington, DC – Because cardiology as we know it is in danger due to reckless cuts proposed by Medicare’s 2010 physician fee schedule, the American College of Cardiology (ACC) today announced congressional sponsorship of new legislation while launching a nationwide grassroots campaign.

The legislation, to be introduced by Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX), will hold cardiology at 2009 practice expenses at the current rates, while allowing other specialty practices to operate at 2010 physician practice information survey (PPIS) values.

Meanwhile, the ACC last week launched the Campaign for Patient Access, a national public affairs campaign designed to tell the story of how these cuts will limit the access of patients all across the country to doctors who treat the nation’s number one killer - heart disease.

“We’ve heard from several members of Congress this week about in-depth conversations they’ve had with cardiologists in their states about the impacts of the cuts on local communities and patient services,” said ACC CEO Jack Lewin. “We’re going to continue to do everything we can in the legislative, legal and regulatory arenas to stop these cuts.”

“Meanwhile, local cardiologists are speaking out about how their specific patients are going to be affected by these draconian measures.”

The PPIS was reported earlier this year to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) with faulty survey data from the American Medical Association (AMA). These results, based on responses from only 55 out of 1,500 physicians surveyed became law, and as a result, cardiologists across the country face cuts in their reimbursement rates of up to 40 percent. The cuts are scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2010.

For more information on the CMS cuts and to find out what local cardiologists are saying, you may view the campaign’s Web site at www.campaignforpatientaccess.org.

About the American College of Cardiology

The American College of Cardiology is leading the way to optimal cardiovascular care and

disease prevention. The College is a 37,000-member nonprofit medical society and bestows the credential Fellow of the American College of Cardiology upon physicians who meet its stringent qualifications. The College is a leader in the formulation of health policy, standards and guidelines, and is a staunch supporter of cardiovascular research. The ACC provides professional education and operates national registries for the measurement and improvement of quality care. More information about the association is available online at www.acc.org.

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